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Saint Helena

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Contents

		Page
	The Territory at a glance	3
I.	Constitutional, legal and political developments	5
II.	Budget	5
III.	Economic conditions	5
	A. General	5
	B. Development	6
	C. Fisheries and agriculture	6
	D. Transport and utilities	7
	E. Banking and credit	7
	F. Tourism	8
IV.	Social conditions	8
	A. General	8
	B. Employment	11
	C. Education	11

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 18 December 2017. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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D. Environment ... 12
V. Ascension ... 13
A. Constitutional and political status ... 13
B. Economic and social conditions ... 13
C. Environment ... 14
VI. Tristan da Cunha ... 15
A. Constitutional and political status ... 15
B. Economic and social conditions ... 15
C. Environment ... 16
VII. Relations with international organizations and partners ... 16
VIII. Future status of the Territory ... 16
A. Position of the territorial Government ... 16
B. Position of the administering Power ... 17
IX. Action taken by the General Assembly ... 17
Annex
Map of Saint Helena ... 20

The Territory at a glance

Territory: Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations, is administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor Lisa Phillips (since April 2016)

Geography: Saint Helena is a small island of volcanic origin situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 km from Angola and 2,900 km from Brazil. Ascension lies 1,200 km to the north-west of Saint Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands lie approximately 2,400 km to the south.

Land area: 310 km^2, consisting of the islands of Saint Helena and Ascension and the Tristan da Cunha group

Exclusive economic zone: 1,641,294 km^2

Population: 4,439 on Saint Helena (September 2017 estimate); 750 on Ascension (September 2017 estimate); and 258 on Tristan da Cunha (November 2017 estimate)

Life expectancy at birth: 75.7 years (women: 78.8 years, men: 72.9 years (2016 estimate))

Language: English

Capital: Jamestown (Saint Helena), Georgetown (Ascension), Edinburgh of the Seven Seas (Tristan da Cunha)

Main political parties: None

Elections: Most recent: Saint Helena: July 2017 (general election); Ascension: November 2017 (by-election); Tristan da Cunha: March 2016

Legislature: Unicameral Legislative Council on Saint Helena (15 seats, 12 elected members). Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, acting after consultation with the Island Council, may make laws for Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

Gross domestic product per capita: £7,100 (Saint Helena, 2014/15). According to the administering Power, because Ascension has no permanent population, its gross domestic product per capita cannot be calculated. Data are unavailable for Tristan da Cunha.

Economy: Fishing, coffee, tourism, the sale of commemorative coins and postage stamps. The economy of Saint Helena depends on financial assistance from the United Kingdom, as well as the sale of fish and coffee beans and tourism (entry permits, conservation tours). For Ascension, financial assistance is received from the United Kingdom, and the main source of revenue is derived through taxes and business levies, with additional revenue from fishing, sales of stamps and coins, handicrafts and tourism. Tristan da Cunha receives some financial assistance from the United Kingdom for the development of infrastructure; the funding of posts in education; health care; and public service training.

Unemployment rate: 0.35 per cent (October 2016 estimate), down from 1.8 per cent in 2008 for Saint Helena. On Ascension, people must be employed to stay on the island, except for children and adult dependants. Tristan da Cunha has full employment.

Monetary unit: Saint Helena pound, which is pegged to the pound sterling (Saint Helena and Ascension); pound sterling (Tristan da Cunha)

Brief history: The island of Saint Helena was reportedly discovered in 1502 by a Spanish navigator in the service of Portugal. By the end of the sixteenth century, it had become a port of call for ships en route from Europe to the East Indies. In 1633, it was formally annexed by the Netherlands. However, in 1659 the British East India Company took possession of the island. It officially became a Crown colony in 1833, was classified as a British dependent territory in 1981 and became a British overseas territory in 2002.

I. Constitutional, legal and political developments

1. The current Constitution of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, which entered into force in September 2009, provides for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. The new Constitution changed the name of the Territory from "Saint Helena and its Dependencies" to "Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha", giving the three islands equal status within the Territory. The Head of the Government is the Governor, who is appointed by the British Crown. However, the ability of the Governor to act inconsistently with the wishes of elected councillors is curtailed in comparison with the previous Constitution. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 provides for the granting of British citizenship to "British overseas territory citizens" when certain qualifications are met.

2. The Legislative Council on Saint Helena comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, three ex officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General) and 12 elected members. The Executive Council, which is presided over by the Governor, consists of the ex officio members and five elected members from the Legislative Council. The ex officio members have no vote in either body. Elections are held by secret ballot, at intervals of no more than four years, by universal suffrage of those aged 17 years and over.

3. The 2009 Constitution contains enhanced provisions for ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive branches of the Government. The judicial system comprises the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and subordinate courts (currently the Magistrates' Court and the Labour Regulating Authority, to determine employment claims, others may be established by ordinance) and the Coroner, to investigate certain sudden or suspicious deaths. There remains a final appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in prescribed circumstances. The Media Commission has been established by ordinance and deals with complaints about breaches of the media codes of practice.

II. Budget

4. Owing to a small tax base due in part to migration and an ageing population, Saint Helena depends heavily on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for funding. The European Union also provides budgetary support. According to information provided by the administering Power, total budgetary aid and shipping support from the Government of the United Kingdom reached £28.7 million for the financial year 2017/18, compared with £22.5 million during the previous period, representing an increase of 21.6 per cent. The 2017/18 aid package was approved in June 2017, following a visit to Saint Helena by representatives of the Department for International Development in November 2016 and subsequent discussions. Discussions for the review of the next budget, which will cover a three-year period, were to take place in January 2018 during a visit to the island of officials of the Department.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

5. The largest employer is the Government of Saint Helena. South Africa and the United Kingdom are the two largest sources of imports. The next largest sector for

employment is retail and services. The local population also earns income from fishing, raising livestock and selling handicrafts. According to the administering Power, the unemployment rate is currently very low, but there are concerns over the productivity rate of the labour force. During the construction of the airport over the past four years, median incomes grew strongly and inflation decreased significantly, with growth in the retail price index averaging 1.6 per cent from the fourth quarter in 2015 to the third quarter in 2016. In 2017, largely as a result of the vote in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and the subsequent drop in the value of the pound sterling, but also as a result of the drought in South Africa, inflation increased. The retail price index grew by 4.4 per cent between the third quarter of 2016 and the third quarter of 2017. Since the completion of the construction of the airport, incomes have remained comparatively low, and the cost of living is high, given that most goods must be imported. Consequently, prices are heavily influenced by external factors. According to the administering Power, Saint Helena expects that the significant increase in the number of tourists envisaged as a result of the start of a commercial air service will help to develop the economy. However, this will take time.

B. Development

6. Saint Helena is eligible to receive budget support from the European Union through the tenth European Development Fund, as are Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. Under the eleventh European Development Fund, the Territory has been granted an indicative amount of €21.5 million for the period 2014–2020. The agreement with the Fund is expected to be signed early in 2018, with funds earmarked for a subsea cable. Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha also receive a proportion of the €5 million reserved by the Fund for isolated territories and can benefit from regional funding. Through a multi-year capital programme for the period 2014–2018, in the amount of £16.5 million, critical island infrastructure was upgraded, including a refurbishment of medical facilities, social housing, education, public utilities and road infrastructure.

7. Disaster management and the response to major incidents and emergencies are managed through the Chief of Police, who serves as the Emergency Planning Coordinator. Working with the Governor, the Chief of Police and his emergency planning team have developed the first major incident response plan of Saint Helena, supported by the risk register for the islands. In 2016, a 10-year plan was developed for the period 2017–2027 (see A/AC.109/2017/13, para. 7).

C. Fisheries and agriculture

8. Fisheries are an important sector of the economy of Saint Helena. According to the United Kingdom, five inshore boats and three offshore vessels fished there regularly in 2017. Local fishers sell their catch to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation. Fish purchases for the period from January to October 2017 amounted to 234 tons, compared with 347.50 tons during the same period the previous year. The decreased catch was in part a result of the absence of fish resources and of irregular fishing from the offshore fleet. No licences for foreign fishing vessels were issued. The Territory now has four vessels capable of fishing the offshore waters within that zone. The vessels fish the offshore seamounts, and this provides much-needed throughput to the cold stores on the island. Saint Helena is still in the stages of finalizing a 10-year strategy that promotes a safe, sustainable and environmentally

friendly fishing industry. In addition, in the period 2013–2014, Saint Helena exported 573.5 kg of Arabica Green-Tipped Bourbon coffee. Exports were 532.5 kg in the period 2014–2015, and 832.5 kg in the period 2015–2016.

D. Transport and utilities

9. According to the administering Power, the airport is now open to commercial flights and operational. A weekly scheduled commercial air service to the island commenced on 14 October 2017, with a monthly air link between Saint Helena and Ascension. Saint Helena also receives other air traffic, such as private charter and medical evacuation flights. The scheduled access to the island by sea via the RMS *Saint Helena* was expected to conclude in February 2018. The journey involved an 18-day round trip from Cape Town, South Africa, which included the connecting voyage to Ascension. The RMS *Saint Helena* had been in service for more than 25 years. A replacement cargo vessel, the MV *Helena*, has been sourced and was expected to commence its schedule in January 2018. It is currently envisaged that this freight service will call at Ascension four times per year. The construction of a wharf in Rupert's Bay has largely been completed, with attention now turning to plans to make Rupert's Wharf operational. The wharf will enable the separation of cargo activity (to take place in Rupert's Wharf in the future) from passenger handling activity, which will continue in James Bay. The Territory has some 168 km of paved roads (118 km on Saint Helena, 40 km on Ascension and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha) and 30 km of unpaved roads (20 km on Saint Helena and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha).

10. Saint Helena has two local radio stations and two satellite television stations that are rebroadcast terrestrially. Ascension has one local radio station and receives relays of broadcasts from Saint Helena. Broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service are available, as are television services for the United States military. Tristan da Cunha has one local radio station and receives television and radio broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service. Saint Helena signed a memorandum of understanding in November 2017 to deliver a deep-sea fibre optic cable in 2020 and high-speed broadband to the island.

11. Saint Helena has benefited from upgrades to its electricity infrastructure. Wind power has become a reliable source of energy. The energy strategy was published in October 2016. The Government of Saint Helena and the local utilities company, Connect Saint Helena, are currently leading a procurement process to move the island to a minimum of 85 per cent renewable energy, which will reduce the island's reliance on fossil fuel and will stabilize the cost of energy on the island.

12. The Department for International Development has provided funding for water infrastructure upgrades during the recent drought, including funding for a new reservoir to increase storage capacity, which was completed early last year. Work to investigate borehole sources is ongoing. Wastewater is currently not treated and there are plans for upgrades, particularly to support the management of wastewater from Half Tree Hollow, the largest conurbation.

E. Banking and credit

13. The Bank of Saint Helena is the sole banking entity; it is a limited company, and the Government of Saint Helena owns the bank as a majority shareholder. It provides banking services and related financial services within Saint Helena and its sub-branch

on Ascension through its core products: current, deposit and savings accounts; and personal, housing and commercial loans. The Bank offers various services, including teller services, an international remittance service and online banking services. A local debit card trial was launched in June 2017 and full service commenced in December 2017.

14. In the communiqué adopted at the sixth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 28 and 29 November 2017, the overseas territories and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed the progress made by the overseas territories with financial centres in implementing the arrangements set out in the exchange of notes on law enforcement exchange of beneficial ownership information, including establishing new and secure systems for the collection, exchange and use of beneficial ownership data, where they did not already exist. The Joint Ministerial Council committed itself to reviewing the effectiveness of the arrangements six months prior to their implementation deadline. It welcomed the cooperation of the overseas territories in international efforts to promote tax transparency and tackle financial crime and the constructive engagement of the overseas territories with the Code of Conduct Group (Business Taxation) of the European Union and at the first meeting of the Global Forum on Asset Recovery. The Joint Ministerial Council reiterated its commitment to showing leadership in tackling corruption and committed itself to prioritizing further work to enable the timely extension to the territories of the application of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, in particular when territories have requested such an extension, and to set a clear path for that process, building on the meeting held during the seventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, held in Vienna from 6 to 10 November 2017.

F. Tourism

15. According to the administering Power and the Government of Saint Helena, the new airport is an important means of bringing new financial opportunities to the island and will help to promote tourism. The rugged natural beauty of the Territory, its rare wildlife and its historic sites, such as Longwood House and Napoleon Bonaparte's tomb, are expected to attract visitors. Of the 3,932 passengers who arrived on Saint Helena in 2016, 3,025 arrived on the RMS *Saint Helena*, 760 arrived by yacht and 144 arrived by air using the new airport. Of those, 1,068 were leisure visitors. The commercial air service that began in 2017 can deliver 76 passengers a week from South Africa and will fly once a month between Saint Helena and Ascension.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

16. According to the administering Power, following the reintroduction of the grant of British citizenship to Saint Helenians in 2002, the island experienced an exodus. The population census conducted in 2016 showed some recovery, with 4,122 Saint Helenians present on census night, an increase of 5.5 per cent from 2008. The increase in population began with the air access project, which has resulted in an increasing number of Saint Helenians returning to the island to take advantage of the improved employment and business development opportunities. The results of the February

2016 census show a total resident population of 4,534, in addition to 268 visitors, bringing the total number of persons present to 4,802.

17. Measured by international standards, Saint Helena is an upper middle-income Territory with few signs of real material poverty, according to information provided by the administering Power. A minimum income standard, introduced in July 2013, protects against poverty by providing an income-related benefit to households in receipt of income below that threshold. As at 30 November 2017, 129 households were in receipt of income-related benefits; 695 persons were in receipt of the basic island pension; and 6 persons were in receipt of unemployment benefits. While poverty rates are low, there are growing concerns regarding relative poverty and income inequality as the economy grows.

18. The census showed the old-age dependency ratio on Saint Helena to be 35 per cent, with an overall age dependency ratio of 56 per cent. That ratio places Saint Helena among the highest old-age dependency ratios in the world, with little potential for natural population change to remedy the situation in the foreseeable future. It will inevitably place significant pressure upon the delivery of appropriate care services for people with complex needs and the care requirements of older persons. There are challenges related to the age range of staff working in the care industry (25 per cent between 55 and 65 years of age and 10 per cent over 65 years of age). Combined with the increasing care needs of people living in the various residential facilities, such challenges create a system-wide risk for Saint Helena in terms of delivery of safe services, with an increased need for such services but a reduced staff force (owing to age) able to meet those needs.

19. There is one general hospital in Jamestown, and there are four health clinics serving people living in rural areas as well as two residential units providing care and support for individuals with learning and physical disabilities. Clinical areas in the hospital were partially refurbished in 2015–2016. A mammography machine, partially funded through fundraising undertaken within the community, was procured in 2017, enabling a breast cancer screening programme to be introduced for women over 50 years of age. In addition, the island has two family centres for children and young people who need protection and has supported accommodation and two locations for vulnerable and older persons.

20. At its sixth meeting, the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council welcomed the fact that the Department of Health of the United Kingdom had continued its support for and commitment, in partnership with the territories and Public Health England, to raising awareness of international health regulations and to developing the relevant capacity to respond to major public health incidents, including outbreaks. The United Kingdom and the overseas territories discussed the importance of raising awareness of and building capacity and expertise in the territories for tackling non-communicable diseases, such as obesity and mental health problems, and the impact of those challenges on the populations of the territories. They committed themselves to working together on those important issues so as to share best practices and resources on preventive approaches and the ways in which they could be adapted to respond to local needs.

21. According to the administering Power, significant progress has been made in Saint Helena with regard to the development of a professional children's services department that delivers effective child protection services and preventive interventions for children and families. The progress made by the Government of Saint Helena since 2014 includes implementing the recommendations made in the *Wass Inquiry Report into Allegations Surrounding Child Safeguarding Issues on Saint*

Helena and Ascension Island, which was published in 2015 (see A/AC.109/2017/13, para. 23). The Wass Inquiry found systemic failures in the island's ability to deliver some services for the people of Saint Helena, including safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, but also acknowledged the progress that had already been made by the Government of Saint Helena in relation to safeguarding.

22. The Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Adults Board took strategic responsibility for overseeing the 49 recommendations from the Wass Inquiry and, according to the administering Power, all of them have been acted upon. Saint Helena has implemented the child protection policy of 2016, which is broadly based upon legislation of the United Kingdom. There have been a range of legislative amendments and developments, including legislation relating to fostering and combating domestic violence and cruelty to children, and the sex offender's act, which have all supported the practice and policies for professionals working with vulnerable children and children who are "in need", as defined under section 30 of the Welfare of Children Ordinance. According to the administering Power, the recruitment of relevant professionals has made a significant difference in the delivery and effectiveness of child protection and services for vulnerable adults. Historical allegations, casework and investigations have been successfully addressed, and clear and appropriate referral and assessment frameworks have been put into place for both adult and children's services.

23. Progress has been made in developing education, training and societal awareness of safeguarding practices within Saint Helena, including the delivery of levels 2 and 3 child safeguarding training, adult safeguarding training, community awareness-raising campaigns, such as White Ribbon Day, and ensuring that, where necessary, non-governmental organizations have safeguarding policies in place.

24. The additional funding provided by the Government of the United Kingdom in 2014/15 and 2015/16 has made possible the achievement of important changes and improvements. There remains the challenge of ensuring that changes are both sustained and embedded across the wider workforce to safeguard against future poor practice. Progress is still required in drug and alcohol services, youth services and support for the children on the island, and for the establishment of an appropriate fostering provision. The greatest challenge for the Safeguarding Directorate is with regard to its provision for the care requirements of older persons specialist residential and community care (see para. 18 above).

25. At the sixth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories discussed their shared resolve to continue to promote respect for human rights and compliance with international obligations in the territories. In the communiqué adopted at that meeting, they welcomed the constructive engagement of the territories in the preparations for the universal periodic review process of the Human Rights Council in that regard. The leaders of the overseas territories also reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the highest possible standards for the protection of children and promotion of children's welfare in the territories. At the meeting, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories discussed the progress made in promoting interagency cooperation in the territories and the development of national response plans to define policy priorities, noted the particular challenges for those territories affected by the recent hurricanes and agreed that children's welfare should remain a central priority for recovery plans, including through the reconstruction of schools. In addition, they welcomed progress made under a memorandum of understanding to promote more effective collaboration between the overseas territories for the safeguarding of children.

B. Employment

26. A significant number of Saint Helenians are employed off-island, especially on Ascension, in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)[1] or in the United Kingdom. During the construction of the airport, which began in late 2011, the demand for workers increased significantly. The release of workers from the project as construction neared completion benefited other sectors of the economy in which labour-force availability had been a constraint. As at 30 November 2017, there were six persons in receipt of unemployment benefits.

C. Education

27. Education is compulsory and free for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are currently four publicly funded schools in operation in Saint Helena. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for school fees at British universities, provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study. In addition, those students have access to funding provided by the European Union for higher or vocational education.

28. Retaining qualified, experienced staff continues to be a challenge. Provisions are now in place to raise the overall quality of teaching through professional development.

29. There have been some gains in education outcomes in recent years, although there remains considerable variation from year to year. In 2017, 45 per cent of pupils achieved five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education passes with a grade C or higher, including in English and mathematics, compared with 22 per cent in 2016, 49 per cent in 2014 and 18 per cent in 2015. It should be noted, however, that, given the small sample size, it is difficult to draw conclusions by looking at year on year performance. The results for 2017 incorporate the reformed Certificate qualifications. In 2017, there was an 88 per cent pass rate in A-level results. Unfortunately, owing to personal circumstances, only one student was awarded a scholarship, compared with seven in 2016. Prior to 2017, performance at the end of primary education was assessed through the formal standardized assessment tests in mathematics, reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar. The results of the assessments, measured as a percentage of students achieving level 4 or above, were reported as a measure of attainment by primary schools.

30. Owing to the changes in the way the standardized assessment tests are managed and distributed, they are no longer available to overseas territories through a secure channel. Access can be gained only after the assessments, along with responses, are made available to the public. That change meant that alternative means of assessing student attainment had to be identified. From 2015, work began to transition schools to meet the demands of the new national curriculum of the United Kingdom. As a part of that effort, new assessment structures were introduced, notably the Cognitive Abilities Test, the Progress Test in English and the Progress Test in Mathematics. Baseline assessments for primary students were completed in the 2015/16 school year. In 2017, the key stage 2 standardized assessment test results showed that 30 per cent of year 6 pupils attained the expected results for their age group in mathematics and

[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

50 per cent in English. While those figures suggest low levels of attainment in mathematics and English, standard age scores improved by 2.0 points in mathematics and 2.5 in English. Rigorous work continues in primary education to meet the demands of the new curriculum and to raise the levels of attainment in mathematics and English. Inclusion is a key focus within schools, with all schools sharing a commitment to providing opportunities for all pupils. The public schools of Saint Helena also offer robust programmes of support to adult learners, with a range of academic and vocational courses offered through the community college.

D. Environment

31. According to the administering Power, the isolated position of Saint Helena has given rise to an unusual and remarkable array of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna. Saint Helena relies heavily on project funding to support conservation initiatives. In 2017, approval for three project bids totalling £543,362 was received from the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund, also known as Darwin Plus.

32. While management of some waste, for example hazardous waste, continues to be a challenge for the island, a capital-funded solid-waste management project has brought about improvements. In addition to a redeveloped landfill site that meets airport safeguarding standards, a public recycling facility has been established and the implementation of a landscape bulky waste programme is in progress. Currently, most waste streams are still going to the landfill, including such commercially viable wastes as metals, plastics and kitchen waste, although a small percentage of glass, paper and cardboard is now recycled. According to the administering Power, there is a viable opportunity for the private sector to develop businesses that process and reuse waste materials. However, according to the administering Power, this needs to be Government-led initially in order to maximize the remaining life of the landfill site.

33. In September 2016, Saint Helena declared the creation of a category VI marine protected area extending 200 nautical miles. In parallel, a marine management plan was published that prohibits any exploitation of the natural resources within the marine protected area that is not undertaken in a controlled, sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.

34. In the communiqué adopted at the sixth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Governments of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories recognized that the destruction wrought by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria had served as a reminder of the vulnerability of the overseas territories to climate change-related events and the devastating effect that they could have on the lives and livelihoods of those who lived there. They committed themselves to continuing the practice of mutual engagement ahead of international forums on climate change, to ensure that the views and priorities of the overseas territories were fully reflected in negotiations. It was agreed that a representative from the territories would attend the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Katowice, Poland, from 3 to 14 December 2018, as part of the delegation of the United Kingdom, highlighting the value of their presence in helping to amplify the shared message of the need for a high degree of ambition on climate change-related targets. The United Kingdom reiterated its commitment to working with the overseas territories on the issue of extending the application of treaties concerning climate change to the territories, including taking forward the work to extend its ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to those territories that had indicated their readiness for it, through initial

consultation with territories that had an interest in participating in the meetings concerning the Paris Agreement to be held in the first half of 2018. The importance of the work in the territories on climate change adaptation and mitigation and collaboration between the territories to share best practices on environmental management and climate change issues, including through the annual meetings of ministers of the environment of the territories, was emphasized.

V. Ascension

A. Constitutional and political status

35. Executive authority for Ascension is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The resident Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor. The Governor is advised by the Island Council, currently comprising five elected members and three ex officio members: the Administrator, the Director of Resources and the Attorney General. Ex officio members have no voting rights. The current Administrator, Nick Kennedy, was sworn in on 22 November 2017. The Administrator represents the Governor of the Territory, is the Head of the government of Ascension and, as an ex officio member, chairs the Island Council in the Governor's absence.

36. Elections are held every three years, the most recent general election having been held in August 2016 and the most recent by-election on 30 November 2017. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, acting after consultation with the Island Council, may make laws for Ascension. Ascension has its own legislation but Saint Helenian law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary.

37. There are six full-time Saint Helena police officers on detachment to Ascension, including a senior officer with the rank of Inspector, who reports to the Chief of Police on Saint Helena. The Chief Magistrate on Saint Helena serves as the Magistrate on Ascension, supported by four local lay magistrates. The Saint Helena Public Solicitor provides legal advice to residents of Ascension and is supported on site by two local lay advocates and the Assistant Public Solicitor.

B. Economic and social conditions

38. Residence on Ascension is dependent upon employment and, consequently, according to the administering Power, the population of Ascension enjoys full employment (or they are dependants of employed people). It is currently estimated that 6 per cent (51 people) of the population are adult dependants who have accompanied their working partner. Residents of Ascension have no right of abode, although some have been on the island for more than 50 years and have children and grandchildren residing there, according to the administering Power. Services are mostly provided by the Government. A private sector company provides the water and electricity supply to most of the island, with the United States military base providing its own supply. There are no commercial exports and little indigenous food production apart from a hydroponics facility set up by the Government. The economy is somewhat fragile and is dependent upon the defence and communication organizations based on the island. As a result of the economic situation and technological change, the population has fallen to under 900 people. Government activities are funded through, among other

things, business levies, property tax, income tax and customs duties. The revenues raised cover the expenditure necessary for the provision of essential public services. There is a continued requirement to invest in the island's infrastructure, balanced with the need to create sufficient liquid reserves.

39. The sale of offshore fishing licences was placed on hold in 2014 and a new, improved, licensing regime was introduced at the end of 2015, alongside a large closed area (over 50 per cent of the economic fishing zone) as part of the commitment by the Government of the United Kingdom to create a large marine protected area around Ascension. There have since been no applications for commercial fishing licences in the open area. A few inshore fishing boats fish recreationally and provide the local community with fresh fish.

40. Health services are provided through the fully functioning hospital in Georgetown. If treatment is not possible locally, cases are referred to the United Kingdom. In support of a healthy lifestyle, there are two gyms on both military bases, three swimming pools and other sporting facilities that are available to islanders.

41. The airport at Ascension is open and operational. On 18 November 2017, the first direct charter flight from Saint Helena landed on Ascension. The charter flight will take place once per month, maintaining the direct link between the two islands after the decommissioning of the RMS *Saint Helena*, expected in early 2018. The links will also be maintained by the MV *Helena*, which is expected to call at Ascension four times per year from 2018 onwards.

42. The school in Two Boats provides education to all children from the age of 3 to 16 years old, which is the General Certificate of Secondary Education level. A safeguarding children board is in place and members include a social worker and representatives of the police and the health and education sectors. The employment of a full-time social worker has significantly raised standards. A special representative commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office concluded that Ascension had made good progress in implementing the recommendations of the Wass Inquiry into child safeguarding. Safeguarding standards are being aligned with the United Kingdom where appropriate, and policies and procedures are being implemented to support the standards. According to the administering Power, success has been noted in the regulation and registration of childminders, whose provision of preschool childcare is vital because there are currently no such facilities on the island. Community education and engagement across the wide range of community members also increase safeguarding awareness and access to a social welfare provision.

C. Environment

43. The island has the second-largest nesting population of green sea turtles in the Atlantic Ocean and the largest nesting population of any marine turtle species in all of the United Kingdom overseas territories. The biodiversity of Ascension is greatly threatened by alien invasive species and, in particular, by introduced plants and mammals.

44. The Conservation Department continues to develop and has succeeded in implementing several projects. Key project and research areas are set out within the Ascension biodiversity action plan. In addition to the National Park of Green Mountain, there are six nature reserves, created to protect the island's critical flora and fauna. A biodiversity and fisheries committee, including members from the Council, works with the Conservation Department and stakeholders in order to

formulate legislation for the protection of the island's natural resources. A low volume of tourism is also developing within this sector. Work has begun to define the area to be covered by the marine protected area.

VI. Tristan da Cunha

A. Constitutional and political status

45. Executive authority for Tristan da Cunha is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The resident Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor. Sean Burns returned as the Administrator in December 2016. The Governor is advised by the Island Council, comprising the Administrator, who is the President of the Council, eight elected members (including the Chief Islander and at least one woman) and three appointed members. Elections are held every three years. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, after consulting with the Island Council, may make laws for Tristan da Cunha.

46. Tristan da Cunha has its own legislation, but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. As a last resort, the laws of England and Wales apply. There are two special constables and one full-time police officer. The Administrator also serves as the Magistrate.

B. Economic and social conditions

47. The economy of Tristan da Cunha is based on traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Rock lobster is sustainably fished and exported to Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States of America. The decision by the European Union in August 2014 to allow access to its market to lobsters from Tristan da Cunha was a major milestone.

48. Since 2007, Tristan da Cunha has enjoyed limited telecommunications. Internet access is now available to the community through an Internet cafe and a Wi-Fi system, although Internet connectivity speeds are very slow. Options to improve connectivity are being considered.

49. In 2009, the Island Council set out broad strategies to secure the island's financial future. According to the United Kingdom, even with such reforms, the island would very soon become insolvent unless further drastic measures were taken. In 2011, a thorough review of budgets was undertaken and strict rules on procurement and expenditure were introduced. According to the administering Power, external financial assistance with infrastructure projects and capacity-building continue to be needed.

50. The Department for International Development funds the position of resident doctors. To build capacity on the island, it also funds several expatriate positions, including two doctors, two clinical nurses, a finance officer, teachers, a social worker and an agricultural adviser. The Department also sponsors annual dental and biennial optometrist visits as well as visits by other medical specialists and a veterinarian, when required. It has been several years since the island's inhabitants have had access to off-island training, but, since 2012, the Department has funded training both on and off the island (the latter in the Isle of Man, Jersey and South Africa). The training has been provided across the Administration, covering the following areas: fisheries,

agriculture, tourism, post office services, public works, and information and communications technology. A multi-year capital programme worth £12.8 million helped to develop new health facilities and harbour infrastructure.

51. Pupils leave school at 16 years of age and tend to work in the Government or the fishing sector. They have no opportunity to proceed to higher education unless they leave the Territory. The current staff members are, by their own admission, not formally qualified. There are now two expatriate teachers in the school. Beyond the age of 16 years, further education must be pursued off island; and one student is currently in Cape Town and three are in the United Kingdom.

C. Environment

52. Tristan da Cunha is successfully implementing conservation projects with help from its partners, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The projects run by the Overseas Territory Environmental Programme include efforts to remove invasive species from uninhabited islands in the Tristan da Cunha group. A project to eradicate mice on Gough Island, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site, continues to progress, with a commencement date for the project scheduled for 2019. According to the administering Power, it was recently announced that the government of Tristan da Cunha plans to designate a marine protection regime around the archipelago by 2020.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

53. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Saint Helena is associated with, but not a part of, the European Union.

54. Since January 2014, the Territory has been a partner of the European Union under Council decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of overseas countries and territories with the European Union, which was approved in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union in the wider world.

55. According to the communiqué adopted at the sixth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories continued their dialogue on the implications for the latter of the decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (known as "Brexit"). In addition, it was indicated that a clear objective of the exit negotiations was to achieve an agreement that worked for all parts of the United Kingdom family, and the United Kingdom affirmed that it would seek to ensure that the security and economic sustainability of the overseas territories was preserved and, where possible, strengthened, post-"Brexit".

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

56. Information on political and constitutional developments regarding the status of Saint Helena is reflected in section I above.

B. Position of the administering Power

57. At the 8th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 9 October 2017, during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British. He said that the territories were an integral part of global Britain and the United Kingdom's commitment to its territories' security and prosperity remained strong, as demonstrated by the swift and comprehensive response to the devastation wreaked in some territories by Hurricane Irma, and the ongoing recovery efforts.

58. The representative of the United Kingdom went on to say that, the Joint Ministerial Council was the primary forum for high-level political dialogue between the United Kingdom and the overseas territories. As the United Kingdom negotiated to leave the European Union, it was fully committed to taking into account the priorities of the overseas territories, including Gibraltar. The United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on European Union negotiations had been established to discuss the priorities of the territories and determine further areas for collective engagement. He added that the fundamental responsibility of the Government of the United Kingdom, under international law and the Charter of the United Nations, was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples.

59. In the communiqué adopted at the sixth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories indicated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed themselves to exploring the ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. For those Territories with permanent populations who wished it, the United Kingdom would continue to support their requests for removal from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships had been the right one — powers were devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities. They also agreed upon the need to continue their engagement on those issues to ensure that constitutional arrangements worked and were developed effectively to promote the best interests of the territories and of the United Kingdom.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

60. On 7 December 2017, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/106 without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2017 (A/72/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Saint Helena to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of Saint Helena, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of Saint Helena to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Stressed the importance of the 2009 Constitution of the Territory and the further development of democratic and good governance;

(e) Welcomed the extension by the administering Power to Saint Helena of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in March 2017;

(f) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(g) Requested the administering Power and relevant international organizations to continue to support the efforts of the territorial Government to address the socioeconomic development challenges of the Territory;

(h) Encouraged the Territory to continue to participate in the activities of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, including regional seminars;

(i) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Saint Helena and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Saint Helena and the administering Power;

(j) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Saint Helena, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(k) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(l) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(m) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Saint Helena and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session and on the implementation of the resolution.

Annex

Map of Saint Helena